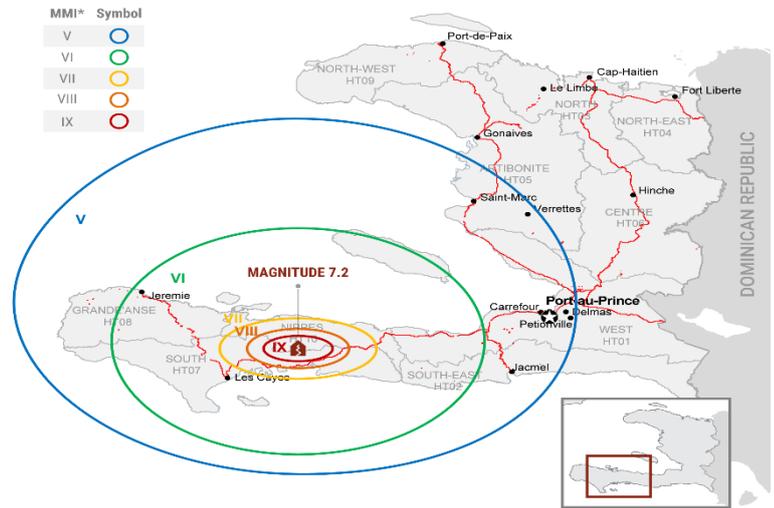


### HIGHLIGHTS

- In the aftermath of the 7.2-magnitude earthquake that rocked southwestern Haiti, 1,400 people are dead and more than 6,900 others injured, while hundreds more are still missing.
- According to Haitian Civil Protection, more than 37,300 homes have been destroyed and 46,000 have sustained damages, leaving thousands homeless and creating pressing shelter and WASH needs.
- The southern and western parts of the country, particularly the Sud, Grand'Anse and Nippes departments, have borne the brunt of the quake, while some communities closer to the epicenter, yet to be reached and out of contact, are thought to have been completely devastated.
- The dire health situation remains the most pressing concern, as several hospitals have been damaged or destroyed, while those still operating are completely overwhelmed, lacking sufficient personnel and medical supplies.
- Despite Tropical Storm Grace weakening into a depression, the system still threatens to dump more than 10 inches of rain over the areas hardest hit by the earthquake later tonight and through tomorrow August 17, potentially triggering deadly flash floods that could complicate humanitarian response efforts.
- The Government and high-ranking UN officials negotiated humanitarian access for a relief convoy to pass through the main road linking the capital Port-au-Prince to the country's southern peninsula which, up to now, had been blocked by gangs for months, with further convoys set to deliver various supplies.



\*Modified Mercalli Intensity (MMI) scale

The administrative boundary Common Operational Datasets used in this map are available from HDX ([www.humdata.org](http://www.humdata.org)). The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Creation date: 14 August 2021 | Boundary source: Centre National de l'Information Geo-Spatiale (CNIGS) | MMI Sources: Based on USGS Feedback: [bbatista@un.org](mailto:bbatista@un.org) | [ocha-fts-data@un.org](mailto:ocha-fts-data@un.org) | [www.unocha.org](http://www.unocha.org) | [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

### SITUATION OVERVIEW

Less than 72 hours after a catastrophic 7.2-magnitude earthquake rocked Haiti, the death toll now stands at 1,400 people and more than 6,900 injured, figures likely to continue increasing as search and rescue teams and volunteers scurry through rubble to find survivors. Several powerful aftershocks followed the initial quake, measuring at or above magnitude 4.0 on the Richter scale, worsening an already dire situation and complicating early search and rescue operations.

The southern and western parts of the country have borne the brunt the earthquake, including Les Cayes, Jeremie, Anse à Veaux, Aquin, Cavaillon and Baradères, while some remote communities closer to the epicenter, which have yet to be reached and remain out of contact, are thought to have been completely devastated. According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), nearly 2.2 million people were exposed to shaking intensity VI or stronger on the Modified Mercantile Intensity (MMI) Scale, with more than 230,000 people living within 15km of the epicentre, per the World Food Programme (WFP).

According to the Haitian Civil Protection General Directorate (DGPC), more than 37,300 homes have been destroyed and nearly 46,000 sustained damages, leaving thousands homeless. The level of damage and destruction to homes suggests that the number of people displaced and homeless will continue to grow over the coming days and weeks, creating significant shelter and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) needs in a context where some 19,000 people internally displaced by escalating gang-related violence have failed to receive adequate assistance in these areas.

While initial aerial reconnaissance missions have shown less catastrophic damage compared to the 2010 earthquake, the devastation wrought by the latest quake is merely another blow to a country still reeling from multiple overlapping crises, generating new humanitarian needs that national systems and humanitarian partners will be hard-pressed to meet. In some of the most affected areas, there are already reports of a lack of food, safe water and medicine.

By far the biggest response challenge for humanitarian partners will be navigating the complex security and humanitarian access situation, which creates serious logistical hurdles that make it very difficult to reach affected areas by land from Port-au-Prince. Following successful negotiations, an initial convoy with Government and UN personnel has reached affected areas in the southern peninsula, cut off by the presence of gangs and persistent road blockages for months, with more convoys planned to deliver various humanitarian relief supplies. In this complicated context, humanitarian partners are also exploring alternative routes and modes of transportation to reach affected people as fast as possible, including via sea.

As the number of people injured continues to rise, the dire health situation in the worst hit areas remains the most pressing concern, as several hospitals have been damaged or destroyed, while those still operating are completely overwhelmed, lacking sufficient personnel and medical supplies to respond to growing health needs. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the displacement of thousands of people poses additional health risks as physical distancing, screening and treatment of COVID-19 will be a significant challenge in a country where less than 1 per cent have received their first jab of the COVID-19 vaccine, with vaccinations against COVID-19 having only just started with arrival in mid-July of 500,000 Moderna doses. There is risk of another wave of COVID-19, particularly if the delta variant arrives on the island.

While Tropical Storm Grace has weakened into a depression, heavy rains and life-threatening floods still threaten to further complicate relief operations in a complex security environment which already constrains humanitarian access. A Tropical Storm Watch is currently in effect for the entire coast of Haiti, as national authorities have been working to mitigate additional exposure and risks to those affected by the earthquake as the system passes over southwestern Haiti. Despite Grace's current disorganization, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts that the system could still dump more than 10 inches of rain over the areas hardest hit by the earthquake tonight and through tomorrow 17 August.

Prime Minister Ariel Henry has declared a one-month national state of emergency, requesting specific assistance in search and rescue operations, with all additional requests for support contingent upon the findings of ongoing damage and needs assessments. Offers to support national response efforts continue to pour in from governments across Latin America and the Caribbean and the UN system is working closely with the Government and other actors to ensure an efficient, well-targeted and principled humanitarian response for those most in need.

## RESPONSE

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Compilation of information, search and rescue, medical services and supplies, clean water and sanitation, emergency shelter and food are immediate priorities. Under the leadership of DGPC, the National Centre for Emergency Operations (COUN) and Departmental Centres for Emergency Operations (COUD) have been activated in response to the earthquake. The Government has fully mobilized rapid response teams in the most affected departments, including Sud, Nippes and Grand'Anse, to carry out search and rescue operations, deliver food assistance and medical supplies, and clear roads and bridges either damaged by the quake or blocked by landslides.

At the request of the Government, on 15 August, USAID deployed a 65-member search and rescue team, equipped with 52,000 pounds of tools, including hydraulic concrete-breaking equipment, saws and drills, as well as essential medical supplies, to support ongoing efforts to find survivors trapped in the rubble and save lives. Additionally, the Coordinating Unit (CU) of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) will provide operational assistance directly to the COUD based on a request for coordination support received from the Government.

On 15 August, OCHA Regional Office (ROLAC) convened a second ad hoc meeting of the Regional Group on Risks, Emergencies and Disasters for Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLAC) to exchange information among regional partners on deployments in order to streamline logistics challenges for mobilizing response personnel and to identify potential synergies and gaps across priority sectors to ensure a coordinated and efficient humanitarian response that strategically links to and complements existing coordination structures in place.

In addition to the activation of national and departmental crisis response centers, a Ministry of Health emergency health crisis cell has been activated at the national level to collate information on response and needs, complimented by daily coordination meetings with health partners on ground. Government engineers have been deployed to evaluate the structural integrity of health facilities, and 15 trucks with medical materials deployed to the 3 affected areas.

Specialized national personnel and supplies to treat trauma and orthopedic needs have also been deployed in the affected area. Patients with more severe and specialized needs are already being transported to non-affected areas and specialized hospitals across the country. With a primary focus to maximize national capacity in-country, efforts are underway to mobilize additional national health specialists from other parts of Haiti. UN Humanitarian Air Service flights are supporting the delivery of supplies and medical staff.

Agencies are making efforts to strengthen response and funding capacities, and have prioritized the deployment of staff in the affected areas. A UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team, composed of 10 experts selected to fit the specificities of the current emergency, including experts on humanitarian access and environmental emergencies, is being deployed this week, together with the Americas Support Team (AST) and Atlas Logistics as operational partners. The team will be deployed to affected areas to enhance the UN system's function in facilitating the coordination of international response activities and information management, and complementing national response efforts. Additionally, ROLAC has activated an Assessment and Analysis (A&A) Cell composed of key global and regional partners to provide remote assessment and information management support to the response, which will liaise closely with the UNDAC team once deployed.

UN agencies, in collaboration with relevant Government counterparts and humanitarian partners, are currently carrying out sector-based damage and needs assessments in the most affected areas. To kick start relief efforts, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is allocating US\$8 million to provide life-saving assistance in health care, clean water, emergency shelter and sanitation. The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has activated its global network of humanitarian aid specialists and launched an appeal of CHF 10 Million to support the Haiti Red Cross Society (HRCS) to deliver emergency assistance and support the early recovery of 25,000 people affected by the quake.

## GAPS & CHALLENGES

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Despite progress made on access to the hard-to-reach areas in the southern peninsula, humanitarian actors will still face significant access and logistical constraints due to the extremely precarious security situation, damaged roads and infrastructure, and the potential for torrential rains associated with Tropical Depression Grace that may impede the delivery of immediate relief supplies and delay damage and needs assessments.

Road blockages along national road number 2 (RN#2), which connects Port-au-Prince to the country's southern peninsula, will continue to present logistics and security challenges for humanitarian partners, as access negotiations with local gangs will have to continue over the course of the emergency. In the aftermath of the earthquake, damage to infrastructure and roads could further limit access by land to affected areas. The national road 7 (RN#7), connecting Les Cayes and Jeremie, has been cut off at Glace River due to a landslide triggered by the earthquake.

Following access negotiations with key armed groups, a humanitarian convoy successfully made passage through RN #2 in Martissant on 15 August. A second inter-agency humanitarian convoy with shelter items took place today, 16 August, along the same route. However, sustained access will be required moving forward. In the meantime, a humanitarian corridor in the Dominican Republic has also been established and prepositioned non-food items (NFIs) are ready for at least 4,500 people. In addition, emergency items have been prepositioned and available in Panama and the Caribbean.

The three main hospitals in the quake-affected area (HIC Cayes, OFATMA Hospital and HAS Jeremie) have been overwhelmed by the large and growing influx of injured people, posing serious challenges to the emergency health response as the demand for health services will only grow in the days and weeks to come. With 7 facilities having reported damages in the 3 hardest hit departments (1 of 5 health institutions contacted in the Sud department, 1 of 7 in the Nippes, and 5 of 8 in Grand'Anse), there is urgent need for emergency medical equipment, specifically additional trauma and orthopedic supplies, and the deployment of local health personnel. Further evaluations on health facilities will be conducted in the coming days by health partners.

While assessments are still in their early stages, health, WASH, shelter and food security have been identified as priority sectors for humanitarian intervention. Prior to the quake, most of these sectors were those already exhibiting the most pressing humanitarian gaps and needs, including 4.4 million acutely food-insecure people, 3.8 million with limited access to safe WASH services and 3 million with unmet needs in health, a situation which will only be exacerbated by the unfolding crisis. With thousands left homeless in such a fragile security situation, sexual exploitation and abuse and gender-based violence are serious concerns for women, girls and boys, the elderly, people living with disabilities and the LGBTIQ+ community, making emergency shelter solutions and protection mechanisms priority response actions.

While rapid response to impact of the earthquake is priority, partners will also need to ensure dire existing needs are not forgotten. Over 19,000 people displaced from their homes since the end of 2020, residing in formal and informal sites, are still in urgent need of basic services and protection. \$2.2 million is still urgently required to support the Government's relocation plan for 1,166 households from three primary IDP sites (Delmas 103, Saint-Yves Church and Carrefour Sports Centre) by September 2021.

As humanitarian needs continue to grow, UN agencies and humanitarian partners already responding to multiple simultaneous crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, internal displacement due to gang-related violence and worsening food insecurity, will see their response capacities stretched even further, creating an urgent need for additional human and financial resources to quickly scale up humanitarian response efforts to match the scale of needs arising from this rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation.

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